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THE
MILLENNIUM:

OR, A
DISSERTATION

ON THE

Most prosperous State of the CHURCH
of CHRIST here on Earth for a
Thousand Years.

By JOSEPH GREENHILL, M.A. *u*
Rector of *East-Horsley*, and *East-Clandon* in *Surry*.

Γινώσκω ὁ θεὸς ἀληθῆς, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύτης.

Paul. Apost. ad Rom. Epist.

The FIFTH EDITION, with large ADDITIONS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for E. JOHNSON, N^o 12, in Ave-Mary-Lane.

M DCC LXXIV.

THE
MILLENNIUM:
OF
DISSENT

ON THE
Most prophetic State of the Church
of CHRIST here on Earth for a



BY JOSEPH G. MILL, M.A.

Rector of St. Andrew's, and St. Andrew's in South.

Tracts: a list of the most important
Tracts, Agost. and Rom. Epist.

THE FIFTH EDITION, with large Additions.

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Printed for E. Johnson, No. 12, in Ave-Mary Lane.

M DCC LXXXV.

TO those that esteem and love
the Church of *England*, more
especially to the PARISHIONERS of
East Horsley and *East Clandon*, this
Dissertation on the most prosperous
State of the Church of CHRIST
for a Thousand Years here on Earth,
is, in all affectionate respect, de-
dicated by the Author.

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the Church of England, more
especially to the PARISHIONERS OF
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P R E F A C E
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mission on earth to take to the sword in his
defence, legions of angels were devoted to his
service.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE not distinguishing between the Kingdom and the Church of CHRIST, hath been, and is the cause of great errors; leading men far from the grace and truth of the Gospel, in some respects, to continuance of the Law and the Prophets within the narrow confines of Jewish ignorance, and of as vain expectations: and this when the grace and truth of the Gospel hath most manifestly appeared, and the end of the Law been rendered most clearly visible, by that long series of prophecies, which connect the Old and New Testament, being most evidently fulfilled. Of his Kingdom, our LORD when on earth declared, that it was not of this world; that if his Kingdom had been of this world, then his servants would have fought in his defence; and that if it

had been consistent with the end of his coming here on earth to take to the sword in his defence, legions of angels were devoted to his service.

I H T

By the holy Scriptures of God's revealed will, the name and authority that our LORD hath, are declared to be incomprehensible, and the power with which he ruleth the nations, and executeth the righteous will of God the Father, in conducting on the course of this world to its appointed end, to be irresistible; that he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; and that thus he must reign through all ages, "till all things shall be subdu'd by Him, who for the suffering of death for the reconciling the world, is crowned with glory and honour; making known by the church unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD *." And agreeable hereto, by the articles of our Creed we profess to believe, that "JESUS CHRIST is ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right

* Ephes. iii. 10, 11.

“right hand of God the Father, and that
 “he shall come again with glory to judge
 “the quick and the dead, and that his king-
 “dom shall have no end.” Our Lord in
 his kingdom is omnipresent, and omni-
 potent. But,

The ways and thoughts of God are not
 like our ways and thoughts; yet we cannot
 but be convinced in our thoughts, that har-
 monious order, and subordination, must run
 through the whole of his ways; that all
 things are ranged in order, and sustained
 therein by his almighty power; that nothing
 falls out without him; that no man, whether
 good or bad, liveth or dieth to himself; that
 the decay of every nation under heaven is
 beheld by him; and that the fall thereof
 never overtaketh them, until sin, the re-
 proach of every nation, hath deservedly
 brought it upon them. And,

The symptoms of decaying states are vi-
 sible enough, such as a multiplicity of laws,
 and frequent changes in government. Fre-
 quent changes in a state, are not unlike the
 restless turnings and motious of dying per-
 sons, which are very bad symptoms of the
 decaying

decaying state of any country, when thereto is added, the unwieldy bulkiness of distant territories; for extent of territories is only a blessing to a righteous nation, the reverse to a nation laden with iniquity. St *John*, speaking of this world in general, says, that “the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

Since man's fall, this world is full of misery, transient and perishable; and that time must come, when this world shall be ripe for its dissolution; when God in his righteous judgment will put an end thereto, and restore all things. In the process of this, the ways of God are past finding out, no depth of understanding can any how fully trace them out: yet this is clear, and undoubtedly true, that the patient will attain unto that day, when they will see God justified in all the sayings of his revealed will; and in the interim they, who acknowledge the only and eternal Son of God to have come down from heaven for their redemption and salvation; and that he is herein *their King, their Priest, and their Prophet*, have the noblest prospect of happiness, and all the assurance thereof, that can be wished for, or desired. There is an harmonious connection between the Old
and

and New Testament; and they who believe what *Moses* said, will believe in JESUS CHRIST; for by searching the scriptures of the Old Testament, it is seen, how those things, which *Moses* and the Prophets did say should come, were fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST: "how that
 " he should suffer; that he should be the
 " first that should rise from the dead, and
 " should shew light unto the people, and to
 " the Gentiles." And they who now believe, have this additional advantage, that they see how the Prophets of the Old Testament, prophesied not unto themselves, in like manner as they do unto us, to whom the ends of the world are come, or the designs of God in continuing on the course of this world, are fully revealed. After our Lord's ascension, all the members of the primitive Church were endued with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the propagation of the knowledge of the Gospel over the whole world. Among the primitive Christians thus endued, the Apostles were reckoned in authority the first, and the Prophets or Preachers the second; and a due subordination enjoined all the members in a regular union with the Body or Church, and the like in succession appointed. Without

this, the public profession of belief of the Gospel, cannot be preserved in any country. Christians have, through the appointed means for the ministration of the Gospel, long enjoyed the greatest light in God's fully and perfectly revealed will for man's redemption; in its being plainly discovered to their sight, *who are God's peculiar people; what restoration all Israel is to expect through the Lord our Righteousness, and where the country and city thereof is;* how the mercies promised and prefigured by the Old Testament are sure, through our LORD's coming here on earth to be our Mediator. Herein GOD will by no means suffer his truth to fail, though it will meet with continual opposition from the world; and, it is apprehended, that, whether the Millennium is past, or not, is now a point that much concerns the welfare of Christians; and that those who do any thing towards having this point cleared up, do service to the cause of Christianity.

An anonymous author, so learned that he sees "the series of the prophecy, the course and order of the Revelation exhibited to St. John," hath accused me as wavering, and wanting in all resolution; and hath treated

treated what I have written on the Millennium, as unworthy of any notice. Probably had this author known what wrongs and insults I have met with in the discharge of my duty, and which made it more incumbent than ordinary in me to seek for knowledge in my profession, and to consider what rule or government was appointed for the administration of the Christian religion, he might have been more candid and impartial in his opinion, and his judgment truer. And now, though I have not that opportunity of consulting and referring to the writings of learned authors, which I once had; yet if this anonymous author shall ever condescend for the future to look on what I write, or have writ relative to the Millennium, and shall make any objections thereto, I will either thankfully acknowledge these objections as true; or if otherwise, will (as far as in my power lies, or can be at my time of life expected) endeavour to shew him, in what it is apprehended he is mistaken; but this not unless he will put his name to what he writes, for there is but one reason, why men hate the light, and that reason alone is sufficient to make others to avoid the having any thing to do with them. At all times we should
hope

hope for the best, and it is incumbent on Christians, "to be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh of them a reason of the hope that is in them:" and this is more especially incumbent on ministers of the Gospel, when this is seen loudly to be demanded of them; and the meekness and fear requisite herein, will make them avoid all those vain and endless disputes, which proud scholars, conceited in their opinions, enter into, to make a shew of their learning. And however it may be proved hereafter, that Dr *Hammond*, and those who apprehend that the Millennium is past, are mistaken in their opinion, there being no such space of time past as can be assigned for a Millennium, though it is owned, that for that space of time, numbers of Christians, about the reign of *Constantine*, retired from the world, and devoted their time in life to the religious worship of God, and in charity to the poor, and lived happily herein: but this is no reigning with CHRIST, agreeable to the standard Millennarians conceit hereof. Probably too such will further object, that the persons themselves thus retiring from, or being above the world, by not giving into

the temptations thereof, and successively enjoying peace and happiness for that space of time, were not (since there is no kind of record thereof) apprehensive that it was *the Millennium*. But what if they were not apprehensive hereof, this is no real objection to the Millennium not being past; for God is the best and only judge in what respect, and how long his prophecies should remain concealed, and when, and how far they should be opened. But supposing what is said in support of the opinion of the Millennium being past, should be shewn to be groundless, yet this opinion of its being past, is not attended with those ill consequences, which those of the contrary opinion have hitherto run into; for herein they have not only advanced what is diametrically contrary to the whole tenor of holy scripture, but in their representing it to come, have fell into mere Jewish dotages and fables; while by indulging their own speculations, they have dreamt of some fancied future Millennium, wherein they see (like the aforelaid anonymous author) “Mahometism
 “extirpated, Popery reformed, and the whole
 “Church in general, both in manners and
 “and discipline, enjoying a more than pri-
 boligleth
 “mitive

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“mitive purity, unmolested by enemies without, unhurt by internal divisions; and that the scene will be enlarged, by all the ancient prophecies receiving their completion, by the restoration of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles.” From such indulgencies in speculations, and the not seeing the completion of the ancient prophecies, according to the light given thereto, upon and since the first preaching of the Gospel, were bred the Fifth monarchy-men, other sects of Fanatics, and the Independents.

CHRIST'S Church here on earth is in a militant state, and ever will be looked upon, and treated as an enemy to what is man's nature through his fall. Without grace man cannot be a member of CHRIST'S Church; without grace it will be an offence to him, as it intercepts the pride and vanity of man's carnal nature. When great and eminent kings and queens became nursing fathers and nursing mothers of the Church, patrons of that far more glorious ministration, which CHRIST'S Church deserves above the law, this was an extraordinary time to CHRIST'S Church here, otherwise the world in general hath hated and despised

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despised the Christian religion, and consequently the ministers thereof: and all persons, all states and potentates, in proportion as they become corrupt, tyrannical and oppressive, seeing how inconsistent the Christian religion is with their tyranny and oppression, will either openly oppose it, or clandestinely corrupt it; striving to reduce it to their purpose, through jealousy; doing all in their power to prevent such gathering together in CHRIST's name, as will advance the real profession of the Christian faith. The divine author and finisher of our faith, the only and eternal Son of God, hath appointed an *Hierarchy*, or sacred government in his church, for the preaching and maintaining faith in him; and declared unto his Apostles, or first ministers, that "all power in heaven and in earth was given unto him; and that he had overcome the world, which would hate them; and promised that he would not leave them comfortless, but would be with them to the end of the world." Since such is the state of CHRIST's Church here on earth, and such promises made to it, can any one but an infidel imagine, that CHRIST will leave his Church destitute of his presence at

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one time more than at another? Undoubtedly he will be present with his Church, as is requisite and necessary, unto the end of the world, the appointed time of which lies in view before him. Now though CHRIST'S Church is militant here on earth, and he the conductor of it through this world, yet it is in the strictest manner incumbent on his soldiers always to remember, that their weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, all-sufficient indeed to prevail for their safety, and victory over the world, when used in that humility, order and love, which he hath made the bond of unity to him their Head, and to his Body the Church: and Christians thus united are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that shew the praises of Him, who hath brought them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

In this world the powers of darkness have their hour, consequently here on earth there must be vicissitudes and perilous times to the end of the world; and the less perilous times ought to be esteemed happy times: but be the times as they will, the faithful will not be seduced, betrayed, and deceived to rebel against

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against the righteous and gracious laws, commands, ordinances, and appointments of God, at no time, by the alluring enchantment of the irreligious policy, or destructive subtlety of any men, or any party of men, conspiring together for the sake of worldly pleasure and profit, herewith Christians never become knowingly and willingly spotted, no plausible pretence should ever induce them to do evil that good may come of it; no speeches of those slaves of sin promising liberty, while they themselves are seen to be the greedy and unsatisfiable servants of corruption, should draw them into practices ruinous of themselves and others; if we are followers of that which is good, no powers, however great, can harm us; of this danger indeed we stand forewarned, that in the most perilous times harmful false prophets, those base hirelings, that creep for lucre sake into the Church, most abound; of these false prophets there are two sorts, those whose smooth tongue and deceitful heart enable them to preach peace to those men, who, thro' their conforming to the evil practices which prevail in this corrupt world, are in the broad and beaten way that leadeth to destruction. The other false prophets are the

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reverse

reverse to these, they who lay heavy burdens on others, either by their gloomy preaching, or their ill foreboding prognostications of what may be but the beginning of sorrows, or the sudden and unwarrantable criterions that they set up as standards for men to judge of their state of salvation by, thus make to weak and inconsiderate Christians the narrow path that leadeth unto life straiter than it is; but there is no room for the tares that these enemies of the Church of CHRIST are for sowing in the hearts of honest and upright men; those men in whose hearts the seed of the word of God hath gotten any growth: for these men, like faithful *Jacob*, "will command their children and their households after them, and see that they keep the way of the LORD;" thus, by a due use of the grace given, save their own souls, add to the number of God's elect, and thus hasten on the coming of the day of the LORD, that great day of the LORD, when he will come in his glorious majesty to judge the world, and close the scene of man's redemption; till which time of the restitution of all things, heaven must receive him enthroned at the right hand of God. If it is thus revealed, whence comes it, that those that
call

call themselves Christians can be so far deluded, as to imagine that an earthly Jerusalem shall ever be any how the place of the immediate residence of our SAVIOUR, or that the Jews will have any terrestrial restoration? Such Christians are not unlike the hardened Jews at the latter end of the former days, in having eyes, and cannot see; for these, if through their pride and deep-rooted prejudices, they did not separate themselves from the Catholick Church of CHRIST, would enjoy the blessed right of truth in union with all faithful members of CHRIST'S Church; while "with all lowliness
 "and meekness, with long suffering, forbear-
 "ing one another in love, they endeavoured
 "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond
 "of peace; there being one body, one spirit;
 "even as we are called in one hope of our
 "calling, one LORD, one faith, one baptism,
 "one GOD and Father; who is above all, and
 "through all, and in all; and unto every one
 "is given grace, according to the measure of
 "the gift of CHRIST." The Reformers of the Church of England, the purest remains of CHRIST'S Catholick Church of any national Church in Christendom, assumed not in the reformation thereof any such independency, as

dissolved this unity of CHRIST's Catholick Church, a building fitly framed and compacted together, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, being the cement which unites us in this building. To the person or persons who separate themselves from the Catholick Church of CHRIST, hold themselves independent thereof, there is no promise of grace; and if they continue such, these become castaways. If the ill consequences of independency should be traced out, and it seen how near it is allied to, and how directly it leads to apostacy, it would be sufficient to make men very heedful hereof. A greater instance of this cannot be brought than in the famous independent, *Milton*, who was a rebel to his God, to his King, and to his Country; to his God, in what he taught of divorce, for herein his doctrine was not less contrary to our SAVIOUR's institution of marriage, than *Mahomet's* plurality of wives; that he was a rebel to his King, no Christian can doubt, nor to his country, in his being a tool to that usurper *Oliver Cromwell*, a man whose soul was of so black a dye, that there was no mischief he was not capable of doing, nor of cant and hypocrisy afterwards to cover it over with; and *Milton*, in the part he acted herein,

herein, contradicted his own principles; for he owns that, *it is not wrong, but right and justice, and some due cause annexed, that deprives a people of their outward liberty, their inward lost.*

No true Christians can ever become rebels to their king and country, nor be disturbers of government, for they see how every station in life, from the scepter to the spade, is fraught with labour and difficulty: they regard government as the ordinance of God for the good of man, they despise not dominion, nor speak evil of dignities; they cannot indeed but be concerned, when they see dignified persons acting contrary to all dignity. If the independent *Milton*, that most excellent poet, who saw so much of truth, and writ so harmoniously and charmingly on it, was drawn aside into such errors and evils as he was, by the self-sufficiency and pride incident to our fallen nature, this should teach us never to expect infallibility in any man, and to be very watchful that our self-sufficiency and pride do not betray us into that forbidden independency of self-papery.

“CHRIST is the true light, which lighteth

“every man that cometh into the world: but

“all are not *Israel* which are of *Israel*.” our SAVIOUR hath declared what sort of persons he

owns, with whom he is graciously present, and whom he rejects.

Where there are no corrupt remains of Christianity, nor preparations for receiving it, a late discovery shews into what state of degeneracy man fell into: for it is discovered, that the principal persons among these herds of men, have accustomed themselves to such practices, endeavouring thereby to satisfy their lust, as are below what is practised by any kind of brute beasts. Yet a certain compiler of voyages hath slightly passed this over, and given these people a character that no ways belongs to them; this must make what he published acceptable, but only to those who have no sense of decency, nor regard for religion; and it must be owned, that there are numbers of such sort of persons, and that the true profession of the Christian Faith appears at this time to be greatly on the decay here. Separation from the church, or independency, hath laid the foundation hereof, thro' mens' disbelief of that article of the Christian Faith, which tends so much to its increase and strength, and on which its due ministration so much depends, that there is "*one Catholic and Apostolic Church;*" but
towards

towards the time of our SAVIOUR'S second coming, it is not to be expected that the ministration of the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven will meet with due esteem and regard, but with the quite contrary treatment, there being then little faith in JESUS CHRIST to be found here on earth, and men greatly deceiving and deceived: so then it would not be unaccountable, if mens' faith in God's gracious goodness, and in his daily providence over them, was found to be so lost in general, that any practice usual among infidels might be set on foot among the nations of this world, tho' it was only to be introduced by busy women, and even too if it was such an impious and sinful practice, as had a manifest tendency to corrupt in posterity, to more than a third and fourth generation, true soundness of health, the greatest blessing God hath given men. The corruptions practised among the *Orabettes* are so great, that they would not go down with the professors of Mahometism, that most horrid corruption in religion; yet horrid as this religion is, no corruption in religion bears the appearance of increasing towards the time appointed for the dissolution of this world, like Mahometism: so devilish

and sensual a corruption in religion, that no proud and conceited independent can invent one more agreeable to the lust and pride of man's fallen nature, Mahometism being a deceit in the highest manner adapted thereto; neither when men shall come to have the light of the Gospel, can there be found any precedent so effectual to persecute Christianity, as Mahometan persecution. Their persecuting Christians with poverty and contempt, is very artful and powerful, while those who have, in their hatred of Christianity, endeavoured to extinguish its light, by shedding the blood of martyrs, have but the more made it shine out thereby; but no sort of persecution is very prevailing till the state takes it in hand; then indeed is the chief corner-stone laid for persecuting the Church of CHRIST: and the surest way to prepare the ground for laying this corner-stone, is their treating his church with contempt and scorn, and the ministrations of it as so contrary to reason, that any settled ministration thereof must be an useless burthen on the public. On the contrary, every Christian state will duly patronize, or receive the ministers of the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven, and not suppress what is made necessary for its ministration.

ministration. Lately much hath been spoken about the power of the state over the church; undoubtedly the state hath great power in countenancing and receiving religion; and no ministers of the Gospel have a right, or can force themselves on any state; all the right they have is, either to be patronized or received as ministers of the Gospel, or openly rejected, not to be undermined: and were they not to stand to this their right, after the manner they are directed by Divine Authority, they would soon become the ministers of some political system, or state religion, inconsistent with, and contrary to the Christian religion. If a state should think fit to reject the ministration of the Gospel, then it is the duty of Christians, while they think fit to live in such a state, to live quietly under that government, and not to raise disturbances; for when Christians apprehend that their abiding in this or that country can be of no service to themselves or others, they are directed to flee to some other country, but the love of their country should make this their last resort. What reception, what patronage Christians in general are to expect from the powers of this world, appears from what our blessed SAVIOUR told his Apostles, when

when

when he said to them, that the time would come when whosoever should carry on their persecution against them, so far as to kill them, would think that they did God service; and nothing contributed towards making *Pontius Pilate* condemn our LORD, more than his being told, that as our LORD had declared himself a king, so if he acquitted him he was not *Cæsar's* friend; to say this to *Pontius Pilate*, the chief priests and Pharisees had moved the people, and that for this political reason, because they thought that unless they could stifle our LORD's doctrine, by persecuting him to death, "all men would believe on him, and the Romans would come and take away their place and nation." Thus the poor remains of their government would be overturned and destroyed. And this had been debated at the meeting of the chiefs of the Jewish state, before it was instilled into the people; and whenever any state persecuteth religion, by endeavouring either immediately to stop its administration, or to lay a foundation for so doing, public good must be their pretence in some shape or other to the people; and this truth, how that the public profession of the godliness of the Gospel, and that only is promotive

promotive in the highest degree of a people's chearful industry and health, is never seen or regarded by any apostatizing people, for such have set up this idol in their hearts, the love and service of the mammon of unrighteousness, before the love of God; and in all probability, this sort of idolatry is carried on here to a degree beyond any example practised heretofore in this nation, since it hath been Christian. But be the times of this world what they will, as Christians at no time need, so they should not be in any thing terrified by their adversaries; their consciousness of what they are should preserve them from this, they being conscious that they are subjects to a King, who is omnipotent and omnipresent in his kingdom; and that his church is not only a part of his kingdom, but the beloved part thereof. It becometh every Christian to have right and distinct notions of the omnipotency of CHRIST's kingdom, and of the militant state of his church here on earth; had this been duly attended unto, there would not have been found either those cruel persecutors, or those ridiculous knights errant, that there have been among those professing themselves members of CHRIST's catholick church; but each, in their earnest contentions against the
 oppositions

oppositions they met with, would have acted for the advancement of the faith on which CHRIST's church is built, as good stewards of the manifold grace of GOD in their several and respective stations: and thus, according to their baptismal vow, the Christian's first and principal oath of allegiance, (and contrary to which no Christian can become allied to any state or potentate on earth) have fought as CHRIST's faithful soldiers, but with the weapons enjoined, and in the fair order and subordination required of them, in duly submitting themselves to one another in the fear of GOD. The hierarchy which our LORD appointed in his church, is plain from what he said to his Apostles, when he told them, that "he appointed unto them a kingdom, as God the Father had appointed him; and that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of *Israel*.*" Thus our LORD laid the foundation of and set a precedent for that form of government, which afterwards subsisted in his church; that the Apostles did, according to our LORD's appointment, judge the *Israel* of God, appears past all contradiction from

* Luke-xxii. 29.

from their *Acts*, for therein it is recorded, that when difficult points occurred, these were referred to, and submitted to the decision of the Apostles assembled at *Jerusalem*; and such their decisions are precedents for articles of religion. Afterwards, in process of time, articles of religion were agreed on occasionally in general councils, made up of the bishops in particular churches, and their proceeding in affairs spiritual or ecclesiastical, were not frustrated by prohibitions from the civil state, whereby ministers of the Gospel are exposed to be intolerably oppressed for the conscientious discharge of their duty. Where occasional proceedings of councils, or of national synods or convocations, are not received, but smothered and suppressed, it must end in the destruction of the power which CHRIST gave to his Catholic and Apostolic Church; and which is necessary for the continuance of the public profession of his religion in any country, from the incidents arising in process of time. A reception of the administration of the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven, rendered vague and unsettled, by prohibition from the civil state, is no reception at all, but where such prohibition prevails, is in fact a most contemptuous treatment,

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treatment, and an annihilating tantalization of the right and power which CHRIST left to his church, for the administration of the mediatorial system of religion, or Gospel-covenant of salvation, founded on faith in him. The clergy, or the ministers of the Gospel, are under the strictest obligation to deliver the terms of salvation, and the consequences of the future judgment revealed, as they are required by the Gospel; if this their doctrine is rejected, or any how opposed, or by any means withstood by the laity, this lies at the charge of the laity. In the Apostles' days, and for the first propagation of the Gospel, miraculous powers were given; but even then they to whom these powers were given, did not always make a proper and orderly use of them, at least some of St. *Paul's* converts did not; and when they acted in a confused manner, in exertion of the powers given, his reproofs of them are backed with the strongest reasons in his epistles to them; yet sometimes it was judged by him, that the remedying these disorders required his presence, or of that person to whose care, direction and management he left them; neither did this always prevail to that purpose, St. *Paul*, at all times, in acquit-
ring

ting himself under the miraculous powers he had, took especial care not to recede from the powers given him, nor to break in upon those general orders and appointments, which he saw would be necessary in the church, when grown to a mature state; but occasionally conformed himself thereto: as when he went with *Barnabas* to *Jerusalem*, to have articles of religion for settling what was disputed among some of his converts; and at another time, as “he and *Timotheus* travelled and went through the cities where converts were, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at *Jerusalem*; and so the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily*.” Without such a way of proceeding in a national reformed church, as often as occasions require, the church will be continually decreasing; for if articles of religion were necessary in the apostles’ days, can it be imagined that the church can do without, at other times? Articles of religion are founded in the unity of *CHRIST*’s catholic and apostolic church, whereby it is acknowledged that “there is one *LORD*, one
“faith,

* Acts ii. 47. iv. 23.

“faith, one baptism, one GOD and Father of
“all.” The present unity of CHRIST’s church,
consisteth not in every other church being
subject to one church paramount over all the
rest, but in their agreement in those truths,
institutions, and appointments which are ne-
cessary in it. It is allowed by the generality of
christians, that CHRIST ordained two sacra-
ments in his church as generally necessary to
salvation; and although the ordaining, the
setting apart, or making sacred men for the
administration of the gospel, is not one of
these sacraments, yet it is to be numbered
among those sacred appointments that CHRIST
did ordain in his church; and none are to take
this office of preaching and administering the
gospel, but those that are ordained thereunto; but
now every one that has front enough to assume
this sacred office to himself, harangues his
audience on the mysteries of our holy religion,
as his principles, or no principles, dictate to
him; from the famous Hibernian orator in St
Stephen’s chapel, down to the meanest that can
harangue away at an ale-house club. And in
like manner the mysteries of the christian faith
are clandestinely made the daily objects of
news-papers, by anonymous writers; who, by
entering

entering on subjects, which are either above our knowledge, or else which length of time now makes impossible to speak of with any determinate certainty, open a door for endless debates, disagreements, and confusion: these being points about which it is the duty and province of the church occasionally to speak, as far as the light given enables men. Of the sacredness and necessity of received and settled ministers of the gospel, thus St *Paul* argues, "How shall men call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent *?" And his charge, a little before his death, to *Timothy*, was, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ||." This order of men cannot subsist in their proper station without means, either ordinary or extraordinary, with either miracles or proper hire to support them in their station: our LORD ordained that those that preached the gospel should live of the gospel,

* Rom. x. 14. 15. || 2 Tim. ii. 2.

gospel, and declared that they were worthy of their hire: they have a character to support, that requires authority and dignity. What if some, who have dedicated themselves to the service of, and live of the gospel, live in a manner inconsistent with, or most scandalous to their profession; this neither doth, nor will affect this order in general in any state truly christian; for there are none thought more worthy of their hire than ministers of the gospel: and accordingly, care hath been taken to place their hire on a respectable and lasting footing, as it is at present by the laws and constitution of this country. Ministers of the gospel, above all others, are to take an especial care, that they become not the base and slavish hirelings of men; conscious that they are bought with a price, that by no means permits them otherwise to be the servants of men, than as the servants of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in their station and calling. The hire of the Clergy reduced to base conditions, will prostitute the remains thereof meanly to be trafficked with; a traffic that no man of the least honour, or honesty, will join in, but be for avoiding the public profession of a minister of the gospel in any country where it will

will lead him to be thus concerned. The welfare of any national church, and of its ministers, in a country the government of which is monarchical, consists in the defence of the king, and in the patronage of the great, and in the good will of the people; their hearing and receiving the ministers of the gospel as required; and the least hath a part to act therein as well as the greatest, and are accordingly accepted of. The best constitution in the state is liable in any country to decay, by having the public profession of true religion either weakened or removed from them; and this by various ways and means. The defence that the most pious and wisest of princes is willing to give to the christian faith, (and what prince would not be desirous, except the doughty prince Monsieur *Voltaire*, that his subjects might be Christians) may be reduced to be little or none: thus a christian prince may find the crown he wears a crown of thorns, through the opposition he meets with in defence of the faith, from factious and rebellious subjects, when they have cast off their fear of God and love for one another, through the weak state religion may be brought into by his predecessors, and those of his family, by their having

long and busily espoused heterodox writers, and introduced practices diametrically opposite to the faith. Ambition, extravagance, and covetousness generally prevailing, will make the rich no more, nor better patrons in the church than they were in *St James's* days. A people debased by corrupt examples, and become impoverished, and eager to devour with a canine appetite, like the rich and covetous, will naturally be heedless what or whom they devour; yet it is generally imagined, and boasted of accordingly, that the genius of this or that nation is averse to popery and tyranny; when the heart of man is naturally so corrupted with darkness and pride, rebellious, and exalting itself against the righteous will of God, that tyranny in some shape or other would universally prevail, did not God, who governs the world, of his gracious goodness avert it from a people. For the spirit of one man to tyrannise over another, arising from the pride of assumed infallibility, and self-sufficiency, generally rages: it doth so not only in popish countries, but in some other churches, deeming themselves reformed in every respect from being either antichrist, or the man of sin; and in the sectaries here, is found raging from furious

P R E F A C E. xxxvii

ous bigotted zealots, down to the demure and pharisaical Quaker; but in no case, nor at any time can any one act for the welfare of CHRIST's church; but to the contrary, unless all his doings be in charity, which requires of us to resist and overcome evil with good; thus to act with patience, and to be humble under the hand of Almighty God, who in his infinite wisdom and goodness, after the counsel of his own will, directs the course of this world, and in his due and appointed time will put an end thereto. And where this charity attends the actions of men, they will have and promote that peace which the world can neither give, nor take away.

A

DISSERTATION
ON THE
MILLENNIUM.

REVELATION. xx. 4.

I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

THERE is no part of the Holy Scripture that hath been treated with more contempt and scorn, nor any part thereof that hath been more wrested, than the Revelation of St John. Prophecy, which is what

this Revelation is declared to be, is God's History of what is to come to pass; and as it is not proper for man to know the times or the seasons, which God the Father hath put in his own power, nor but little of what is coming on in the appointed course of this world, till events confirm the truth, and explain the mysterious terms of Prophecy; therefore of this book of Prophecy, which is very extensive, even from the time it was given in, unto the end of this world, there can be but little thereof seen by man; yet any man may be, and the man who doth confine his view within due bounds, will be blessed in hearing and reading the words of this Prophecy, and in keeping those things that are written therein.

What seems to have been a great cause of the Holy Scriptures having been wrested by the inhabitants of this country, and that much to their destruction, seems to have been that which should have been for their welfare and happiness, their having the Holy Scriptures translated into their native tongue; for now they are for hearing without the appointed Preachers, or Ministers of the Gospel; contrary to the general rule laid down in Holy Scriptures. A translation affordeth light to the ignorant,

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 41

ignorant, but a light where there is no other advantage, obscure and easily to be extinguished: the truth of this may be seen from a general view of the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures are the Revelation of the will of God in man's redemption and salvation, not the word of man, nor to be treated as such; but to be regarded as the word of God Almighty, infinitely wise and knowing: and all the wisdom and knowledge that we can obtain herein, cannot be obtained but by assiduous solicitation in the means he hath appointed, and by making a due use of what is given; it would be as far beneath the wisdom of God, to satisfy the curiosity of the captiously inquisitive, in the revelation of his will, as it would be to gratify the covetous in their desires, or the vain and ambitious in their views, by the direction of his good and all-disposing Providence, which is ever found to disappoint them. Revelation being founded on the truth of God the Father's eternal purpose, for the redemption and salvation of man, from the continuance of the being of man, is like the pillar of the cloud which God placed between the camp of the *Egyptians* and the camp of *Israel*, darkness to some, and
light

light to others; and none have eyes, and cannot see the light of Holy Scriptures, nor ears, and cannot hear the truth thereof, but they who ought to have such eyes and such ears; from whom the Gospel is hid, it is hid by Almighty God, in whose sight every creature is manifest, and all things naked and open unto his eyes; and as in the course and continuance of the material world, there is nothing but answers the purpose of being permitted to exist, so in the moral world, no man, whether good or bad, liveth or dieth to himself; and when God, the judge of all, shall finally display his justice, and reveal his righteous judgment, he will then be justified in all the sayings of his revealed will, for the redemption and salvation of man, as well as in all his appointments for the course of the continuance of this world: the end of all things is at hand*, things are in their appointed course, until all shall be gloriously closed.

The devil seduced man from the happy state he was created in, and betrayed him into darkness, pride, rebellion, and misery, like his own, by proposing the greatest increase of his knowledge, in knowing good and evil as God; how

* Ephes. iii. 10.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 43

how great this darkness, and how boundless this pride is, an instance hereof may be seen in those who cast off their faith, and patient abiding on God's goodness for their happiness, their confidence which hath so great recompence of reward; for herein they set up their will above the will of God, and when they cannot bring the divine knowledge to a level with their own darkness, proudly arraigning it, they make it inferior thereto; and these sort of persons, when, through conceit of their science, they give a loose to their tongue or their pen, it is not a less miracle to bring to truth and to silence them, than it is to make the dumb * beast speak.

Disputes with those who have their part with unbelievers, are endless, their pride in wrangling being as great as that darkness in which they are lost; yet thus to judge from the strongest appearance of the present evil state of men, that they are thus reprobate,

no

* Of modern apostates Monsieur *Voltaire* appears the greatest; and, considering his age, and the pertness, the subtilty, and the baseness with which he hath carried on his apostacy, he must be owned to be a very surprising person, and fit to be placed among the greatest collection of monsters, there to be gazed at.

no room left for their repentance, but all opportunity thereof taken from them, is spiritual pride in seeing others faults, and overlooking our own; for an evil heart of unbelief, is, in fact, the heart we are too subject unto; we should hope that that time of further trial and gracious affliction may be extended to those, who at present disbelieve and despise the riches of God's mercy and goodness in his revealed will, which may lead them to repentance; but till some sign of their repentance is seen, it is by no means prudent to cast this pearl at their feet, for nothing less can bring a man to an hardened disbelief of the mystery of godliness, by being credulous in the mystery of iniquity, than deserved outer darkness; but such determinate state of darkness in man, it is not for the human eye to see. Wicked men, indeed, by their public, professed, and scandalous impiety and prophaneness, condemn themselves in the sight of men, neither rash, nor censorious in their judgment: for from that judging of others, which reason dictates, we cannot, we ought not to refrain; nor from properly shewing our resentment thereof, and all ~~the~~ favourable opinion conceived in the generous and good minds, of those by whom offences

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 45

offences are seen to come, is founded on their repentance.

Proposing that what shall be treated of in this discourse, on the reign of Saints or Christians for a thousand years, signified unto *St John*, shall be promotive of that love of man, and of that humility, which our pure religion requires from us, founded on that fear and love of God which keeps us unspotted from the world; and that what is said hereon shall be within the apprehension of a man but of common and of ordinary understanding, and useful to such as think not more highly of themselves than what they ought to think, but think of themselves as members in one body, whatever office they have, endeavouring thus to bring it home to mens' bosoms in what concerns them in the one thing necessary; I shall mention first some general observations on Revelation, and some incidents relative to the subject treated of, and a general truth of our Holy Religion, before I come to explain the words chosen for the subject of this discourse.

The first part of the book of Revelation contains Prophecies concerning the state of the Seven Churches which were in *Asia*, and these

these Prophecies were directed to the Bishops presiding in those Churches, by our most blessed LORD and SAVIOUR; and were so interpreted and explained, that to those concerned, and who lived at that time, there could be no difficulty in understanding what was the meaning; and men were called on to hear and regard what was not numbered among the secret things of God, but thus plainly revealed concerning the Seven Churches in *Asia*. But in the other part of this book, a discovery was made to St *John*, the most beloved disciple of our LORD and SAVIOUR, of the awful and glorious majesty and power of Almighty God, and of his eternal Son, too extensive, high, and mysterious for the human sight; awful intimations of what was coming on in the appointed and decreed course of the world, what can be only seen in part, either in what a plain interpretation was given, or where facts come to pass have rendered it easily to be seen by all, but those who hate the light given. For there is nothing that concerns our happiness revealed in the will of God, but what the learned and unlearned may know to their comfort and blessing; and great thanks are due to those learned and good men, who

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 47

who have dedicated their time and pains in reading this book of Prophecy, for their good intent, that others might hear the words thereof, and keep those things which are written therein; and it is only pride and presumption that induces the unlearned to wrest this Holy Scripture; pride, which even hides truth from the most learned, and leaves them in the worst of ignorance, that of positive ignorance, through their vain affectation of wisdom and science, and their unwary giving into the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world; it being the grace of humility, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, and the testimony of Jesus: a disposition of mind, not only necessary for reading to any good effect any part of the book of Revelation, but whatever is written elsewhere in Holy Scripture.

The difficulties attending such an undertaking as the explaining any part of the book of Revelation, are difficulties great in themselves, and made by far much greater thro' partiality and inveterate prejudices; but the Holy Scriptures being a fund of light inexhaustible, no preachers or ministers of the Gospel, since the Apostles and Prophets, ever have or will teach or explain the Holy Scrip-
tures

tures so fully and perfectly, as to leave no room for other ministers after them to add somewhat to their explanations, more especially as to what our LORD, whose Prophecies are complete and unlimited, extended to the fulfilling of all things, hath prophesied of, and declared to be the state of his church here on earth; for as the time of fulfilling all things prophesied hereof is continually drawing towards its conclusion, so length of time casts a light on things heretofore not discernible; and he who distinguishes between the differences of times, and between things revealed and * secret, will agree with the Holy Scriptures: so that herein, if we truly and duly confine our view within the limits of human knowledge, of things foretold and come to pass, we shall with patience wait for those things which are to come.

As God saw fit to declare unto his servants, in the book of Revelation, things which must at the time of signifying that Prophecy unto St *John* have their commencement, shortly come to pass, so there are general and special reasons

* Some things that seem obvious, when they come to be reflected on, no man can account for them, yet to deny them, would be the greatest scepticism.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 49

reasons why this Prophecy should be expressed in mysterious terms, as well as the Prophecies which were given heretofore. Some years ago, a most eminent and learned person * conjectured, that "God was about opening the "mysteries of the Revelation." Certainly when any part of what God hath mysteriously intimated herein of the ways of his Providence, in the appointed course of the world shall come to be seen, his appointments will be seen to be full of all perfection, and in harmony and fair proportion tending to that end which God hath revealed to be the purpose of his will; and the opening of the book of Revelation, so far as is necessary, at any time, we may reasonably look upon as a comfort reserved for his faithful servants: and much in need will they stand of comfort, when the Christian Faith shall be on its greatest decline.

What is prophesied in the book of Revelation of the beast or tyrant, and of the false prophet, is prophesied in general, and in the abstract, like as what is prophesied elsewhere in Holy Scripture of anti-christ and the man of sin: accordingly the beast or tyrant, and the false

* Sir Isaac Newton, in his Commentaries on the book of Revelation.

false prophet, often have united and centered in the same persons, and sometimes eminently thus, as in *Mahomet* and *Oliver Cromwell*: and the greatest ills are done by such kind of persons, such ills as would destroy all social or civil happiness, did not God, of his gracious goodness, direct it otherwise; when the Popes, succeeding that good bishop and metropolitan of Rome, *Gregory* the great, through false prophecy, in length of time became abominable tyrants over these parts of Christendom; then such gross darkness overspread these parts, that they wanted not the cant and hypocrisy of a *Cromwell* to conceal their tyranny, but made an open shew thereof. And what opened and paved the way for the reformation hereof, was their intolerable presumption, haughtiness, and pride; and in the height thereof, when grown suspicious of the precarious footing, the sandy foundation, on which usurpation and tyranny stand, ever wanting support and aid, and most when at its height; they took to their aid herein a prince who had remarkably shewed himself forward to defend the usurped power of Popes, but who was ordained to put a period to the power they usurped over this renowned national church, and raised for that,

and

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 51

and other ends, seen right in the whole in the sight of God, according to the time of his appointed course, and the end of the world; "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and useth such instruments for this purpose, as are seen fit in his sight. Undoubtedly *Henry* the eighth was the great instrument in bringing about a reformation in religion, though the heart of this Pharaoh was not in the least reformed, but in the cruel and arbitrary way in which he acted, and in the manner in which he shewed himself, gave as great an instance of his being an Antichrist, as ever any pope did; yet this doth not in the least invalidate the reformation: to remedy some diseases, physicians are seen to use, with success, a certain proportion of rank poison: therefore those men must be sunk into the most wretched blindness and pride, who do not see and acknowledge that Almighty God doth, by the direction of his all-disposing Providence, ever in the end make good to come from ill. King *Henry* the eighth's transferring the arbitrariness and tyranny of the pope to himself, was the most material point, (as the times then stood) towards a reformation in religion; and might have proved more

to the advancement, and better for the fulfilling all things relating to the Gospel dispensation, (so it may appear in the limited and short sight of man) had not succeeding princes and potentates, for the generality, trod in his steps, by either defending or protesting against papal usurpation and tyranny, just as it served whatever purpose they had in view; and when their purposes were bad and destructive, there were found hirelings ready to make the iniquity of their times current, by a prostitution of their knowledge and learning, and whose constant endeavour so to do hath been, either to heighten beyond truth, or else to blacken the piety and charity that did heretofore prevail in the church of CHRIST, when neither superstition, nor cruel worldly policy deformed it, as it hath done; to this intent, drawing their arguments either from ignorance, or excess, or weak refinements, or from abuse; a way of reasoning that should be well attended unto, and regarded for admonition, by those to whom the ends of the world are come, in order to amend from past errors; and the considerate and serious Christian, reflecting on what hath come to pass in respect hereof, by the light of revelation, sees
enough

enough to make him adore the Almighty power and unsearchable wisdom of God, in directing the course of this world for a state of trial to man, and should learn hencefrom how necessary it is for him with care and caution to keep himself unspotted from the world; seeing how God is righteous, and owning all his ways are justifiable in wisdom, goodness, mercy, and truth.

In Holy Scripture it is revealed, that one of the great and glorious ends consequent from our blessed LORD's laying aside the glory he had, and coming at a certain fitness and fulness of time, in respect both to Jews and Gentiles, down from heaven, here on earth, in our frail flesh, is the judgment of this world by him, "who hath all power in heaven and in earth" for bringing it on to its final judgment; and coming again to judge both the quick and the dead, will put an end thereto at a time, when the number of the elect shall be completed, the times of the Gentiles, and the iniquity of the world fulfilled; a judge, of whose glorious coming at such fullness of time, to put an end to this world, there is no possibility of delay, for continuance hereof would be a continuance of this world, when an hell,

if faith was no where to be found here on earth, that faith, of which from the foundation of this world, or the continuance of the being of man through redemption from his fall, until the author and finisher of our faith fully and expressly revealed it, there was an obscure and faint degree. For although christianity cannot be said to be as old as the creation, yet it certainly hath subsisted ever since the continuance of the being of man after his fall; for all men, who lived before the coming of CHRIST, and shall be admitted to drink of the spring of that immortal life in the kingdom of heaven, to which we are in special manner called and elected, can only drink thereof, but ^{as} flowing from that rock which followed them, and that rock is CHRIST: and such date of Christianity is perfectly consistent with the newness of our Lord's Testament, for that is new to man, which is newly discovered, or revealed to him; neither doth this make void the Old Testament in any one purpose it was designed for; the Prophets under which prophesied not unto themselves, but unto us, to whom the ends of the world are come; ends kept secret, or not fully revealed, until after the coming of CHRIST our Redeemer;

deemer; and he, who hath the least knowledge hereof, hath greater advantage than any of those who lived before the publication of the Gospel of the kingdom of Heaven; we are not to judge those without the Gospel, all that we know of the general extensiveness of our LORD's mediation is, that all that are saved are saved through his mediation; and what we are commanded in relation hereto, is to be earnest in our contention for the faith, as he is especially the Saviour of those that believe.

The truth of our holy religion, here proposed to be mentioned, is the militant state of CHRIST's Church, which is a general truth not to be contradicted, but by explaining some passages of Holy Scripture in a manner repugnant to the whole tenor thereof, either by wresting Prophecies from what is meant thereby, or by limiting them to what is only meant in part.

We are, by the Holy Scriptures, forbidden inordinate love of the things of this world, and cautioned against an unguarded and false friendship with men; for the whole world, as to what is generally practised in it, lieth in wickedness; inordinate love of the world brings men to hate all that is good and virtuous: hence men hated both our LORD and his

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Apostles; and he acquainted them that, as his servants, they could not expect to be greater than he, nor to meet with better treatment from the world for the good they should do, than what he had done; and he encouraged them to bear up against the oppositions and afflictions they should meet with, upon the noblest motives; and told them, that he would give them strength and courage to overcome these oppositions, great as they were; and wisdom, that all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist. True it is, though atheistical persons, in their willing and affected ignorance, affirm all times to be the same, that this was a very extraordinary time in the world, that due and full time, according to God's determinate counsel, for bringing about the redemption of man: and other men must not expect equal strength and comfort with that given to the Apostles and primitive Christians, as they have not equal difficulties and oppositions to surmount; yet all that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, must expect, not only in ordinary, but in the best of times, such difficulties and oppositions in the narrow way that leadeth unto life, as require great constancy, in seeking for comfort and strength

strength to enable them to go through difficulties and temptations; and enter into life; for our life here is but a state of trial, and probably more of the many called defeat themselves of their eternal salvation, through want of due care thereafter, than through an ill-grounded confidence therein.

Since the gospel was first preached to all the world, and the elect gathered together by those messengers of God, the Apostles and Prophets; or first inspired Preachers thereof, various have been the times of its reception; in general the Princes of this world have been more or less for establishing professions of the Christian faith, as they have appeared to them to be more or less agreeable to their worldly interest; and this has made them to defend with violence, contrary to the most express will of the Almighty Founder, such particular professions

• Honourable reception of, and due regard for the profession of Christianity, is the true and only means by which the Christian Religion can be defended by princes, from whom it did not come, but to whom it came by their hearing and receiving the preachers thereof: and a due regard will be had to this truth, whenever any reformation in a national Church is designed; but when its deformation and ruin are designed, then the reverse.

professions thereof, as they apprehended were coincident with such their interest; and as our Lord declared himself a King, for the sake of his Church, above all principalities and powers, and that he had overcome the world, and that whosoever should suffer with him, should reign with him; hence kings of this world, insensible and regardless how hard it is to kick against the pricks in opposing Almighty Power, have often opposed our Lord, except in those foretold most prosperous days of Christianity, the past Millennium, and that with a jealousy like that of *Herod's*; and herein they have been seconded, as he was, by faithless, unbelieving priests, false prophets, and all the venal tribe of hirelings, who have conformed to the worst of times, and then prophesied or set forth deceits or smooth things, to make the iniquity of such times current, while the Clergy of the church of this land have hitherto in perilous times stood in the gap.

What St *John* saw of the state of Christianity for a thousand years, I apprehend, was, that thrones, power, safety, and security, and judgment, the spirit, not of fear, but of love and of a sound mind, eminently were given for that

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 59

that space of time to good and faithful Christians, to those who out of regard for their religion and salvation, should cut themselves off from the enchanting pleasures of this world, and from the profits that are the wages of the iniquity prevailing in it; to those who would not worship or idolize beasts * or tyrants, or their image or likeness, nor give any countenance to, nor take any part in their oppressions of mankind: that a more than ordinary number of such, succeeding one another, who thus took their cross, and in the trials befalling them, followed the exemplary patience of our most blessed Lord and Saviour, were to live with him, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated † into this kingdom, to reign with him a thousand years; a space of time that should be the happiest days of Christianity, when successive numbers of such Christians, raised from dead works to serve the living God in their respective stations, were thus priests of God and of Christ, by

* In some countries, where religion and liberty are much talked of, the pride of beasts or tyrants is so great, that they are literally for making men to worship them.

† What this translation is, see *Philip.* iii. 20, 21. *Heb.* xii. 22, 23, 24.

being shining lights and fair examples before men, of the blessedness of that religion they professed, and herein eminently happy during that space of time; and as all men are lost in trespasses and sins, and counted dead before God, and are only quickened, regenerated, or raised to a life of virtue and happiness, but through our SAVIOUR'S mediation and intercession; so the rest of the dead, the rest of mortal men, those of them who are the remaining number of God's elect, are to live in their first resurrection, their resurrection from the misery and sins of their fallen nature, after the thousand years were finished, when there should ensue great deceit, corruption, and decrease of faith; and when Christians see the enmity and opposition there is in the world to the faith they profess, to come to pass as foretold, they should be nothing terrified by their numerous adversaries; to be so argues a prevarication in them of the faith they profess, and that there is wanting in them what is made their victory; for how do they that are terrified by the adversaries of our religion, believe, that "JESUS CHRIST, the author and finisher of our faith, is the only and eternal Son of God;

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 61

" God; that his kingdom * is not of, but above
 " this world; that all power is given unto him
 " in heaven and in earth; that God the Fa-
 " ther hath set him at his own right hand in
 " the heavenly places, far above all principa-
 " lity, and power, and might, and dominion,
 " and every name that is named, not only in
 " this world, but also in that which is to come;
 " and hath put all things under his feet, and
 " gave him to be head over all things to the
 " Church; that he was loved of the Father
 " before the foundation of the world; that
 " he is before all things, and by him all things
 " consist; that he was in the beginning; that
 " all things were made by him, and without
 " him was not any thing made that was made;
 " that

* Of modern teachers, who by their false glosses have
 cast confusion and darkness on the Holy Scriptures,
 none equal the late Bishop of Winchester, for therein he
 exceeds what any scribbling Lady hath written against
 the kingdom and church of CHRIST; but men that hate
 the light, always have been, and always will be the
 ready followers and abettors of those heretical and schif-
 matical writers, who write with plausibility, who speci-
 ously intermingle falsehood with truth, call evil good,
 and good evil; thus put bitter for sweet, and sweet for
 bitter; and herein their followers and abettors are often
 as much, and sometimes far more, to blame than those
 authors themselves.

“ that he is the blessed and only potentate;
 “ that his throne endureth for ever; that his
 “ scepter is a scepter of righteousness; and
 “ that the nation and kingdom that will not
 “ serve him shall perish; that he hath a name
 “ that no man can read, being that of King of
 “ Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath
 “ immortality, dwelling in that light which no
 “ man can approach unto; whom no man
 “ hath seen, nor can see; that he upholds all
 “ things by the Word of his power, able to
 “ subdue all things to himself; that God the
 “ Father had committed all judgment to
 “ him, and hath given the heathen * for his
 “ inheritance, and the uttermost part of the
 “ earth for his possession: and that from his
 “ throne in heaven he doth behold ungodli-
 “ ness and wrong; that ungodliness and
 “ wrong that will at last overwhelm an incor-
 “ rigible world; that herein our LORD and
 “ SAVIOUR triumphantly leading captivity
 “ captive,

* Some imagine from this, and such like passages of
 Holy Scripture, that all the world, at some certain time,
 shall become Christians, that the Christian faith shall be
 more generally professed, than it was during any time
 of the Millennium: but do such passages imply this, do
 they not refer to CHRIST's kingdom?

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 63

"captive, limits the power of evil spirits, and
 "rules the unruly wills and affections of sin-
 "ful men, making all things work together
 "for good to them that love God, by the
 "gifts given unto them; that he is gone
 "forth thus conquering and to conquer, and
 "must so reign till he hath destroyed all
 "enemies, and the last enemy death; and
 "when all things shall be subdued, then this
 "kingdom of CHRIST's will be given up at
 "the last day, the day of fulfilling and resti-
 "tution of all things; when wicked men,
 "and the angels that left their first estate,
 "reserved for punishment, shall receive their
 "final doom; and when * all the *Israel* of
 "God shall be saved: the righteous, they
 "that have done good shall go into everlasting
 "life, heirs with those that have been joined
 "or united by faith in CHRIST JESUS, and
 "shall then see him as he is, the brightness
 "of the glory of God the Father, and the
 "express image of his person; and how that
 "God is all in all; and with incessant joy for
 "ever adore the blessed Trinity: the kingdom
 "of heaven or of God being fully come unto
 "them

* Who are all *Israel*, see Matth. xix. 28. Rom. ii. 9.
 and ix. 8. and the General Epistle of St. James.

“them in a new earth, wherein dwelleth
 “righteousness, where perfectly purified and
 “sanctified, with the highest pleasure, they will
 “do his will, and hallow his name with ever-
 “lasting praises in all purity and harmony.”

The * righteous, while they are detained in
 this world, (and a succession of some such, in
 opposition to the mystery † of iniquity, God
 will raise up till the day of the revelation of
 his judgment) are a light unto the world; in
 the fair proof and witness that they give of
 the blessedness of our Holy Religion; for
 being the reverse to tyrants and their idolizers,
 by seeing, and in fact acknowledging, that in
 their station they are but servants of others,
 and that whatsoever of power, learning, va-
 lour, or riches, their gracious LORD and
 Master hath given them, he hath given for
 this purpose; and the true Christian is the
 only

* As in a church there must be heretics, so in the
 course of this world, upon the same account, in a state,
 there must be bad men, abandoned to their pride and
 avarice; but a good constitution in a state is not de-
 stroyed, but when there are by abundance too many
 such therein, and they fully and finally prevail against
 their country, by depriving it of the means of virtuous
 and happy frugality and industry.

† 2 Thess. 1.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 65

only patriot, the greatest opposer of tyranny and slavery, whether he be king or subject: it is Christianity, and that only, that can preserve their mutual happiness, and from hence it was, that men heretofore proved dutiful and respectful to their prince, and faithful to the public; their principles of obedience due to princes being agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and their practice agreeable to their principles, they faithfully served, honoured, and humbly obeyed kings in God, and for God, according to his blessed word and ordinance; as they believed that he over-ruled all the kingdoms of the world from his throne in heaven, beholding all the dwellers on earth, and ruling the hearts of princes and of people.

God, immensely good, is long-suffering, and nothing but the iniquity of nations determines him to pull down and destroy; and when this determines him so to do, nothing can save them but their repentance and amendment; their boasted confidence in that that is endless, hurries them on the faster to their destruction. This is what faithful Christians have, and what every faithful Christian doth believe, in relation to the governments and states of this world; and the hope that he

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hath

hath of being a glorious and happy citizen in another world; and makes him a good, a patient, and industrious citizen in this world; and such cannot but be free, and happy in their freedom, by rendering to God the things that are God's, and to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, as the faith they profess requires and directs: while to nations prophane and wicked, rebellious and incorrigible, not to be forewarned, so given up to their own destructive ways, not a prince * long tutored in the school of affliction could do any good; for the licentiousness and iniquity prevailing among such people, is the direct, sure, and inevitable way to slavery, which makes the rich and the poor of a country equally miserable: no slave being more unhappy than the slave of greatness; and from which it is only a sense of religion can preserve them.

The piety prevailing heretofore in this land, may be seen, from the great regard had for places of worship, which are now in many places neglected, and suffered to go to decay, through want, not only of decent, but necessary repair, and no means used adequate to such repair; while other buildings are adorned with

* Not a second Alfred.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 67

with elegance. The worshipping God in spirit and in truth, at churches, the houses of prayer, which holiness becometh for ever, requires, that the clownish unmannerliness usual at some Dutch churches, and the finery and foppery usual in Popish churches, should be avoided, both extremes being attended with very ill consequences; the one leading men to a proud and scornful contempt for religion, the other to either a weak or cruel superstition. Likewise the piety that did prevail here, may be seen from the care that was taken to maintain and support the poor*, in a manner the charity of our religion requires; who are now generally left to sink under an allowance not sufficient to sustain them, or are forced to live herded together promiscuously, the aged and the young, the clean and the nasty, the diligent and the idle, under a master, who makes a trade of their necessity.

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But

* By the Holy Apostles, the care of maintaining and supporting the poor was solemnly appointed to be the office and ministry of Deacons, long executed with a tender concern for their general good and welfare, and whatsoever is due to, or raised for the relief of the poor, should be thus done or administered; in some parishes, what is due to the poor is withheld from them; in some, perverted or abused.

But here it may be objected, and that with reason too, that men heretofore, in regard to adorning churches, fell into superstition, at least those of the church of *Rome*; who, not seeing how CHRIST is “the end of the law for “righteousness, to every one that believeth,” neither how he blotted out the letter of the law, nor how all the members of his body are complete in him, the head of all principality and power; were beguiled of the reward or happiness attending their religion, by being led by that corrupt, and cautioned against doctrine * of works of supererogation, or works besides, over and above God’s commandments, not only into much superstition, but into that idolatry into which they fell; and as to maintenance of the poor, that which should have been a comfortable relief, and a competent support of them, this superstition and excess in the givers, and waste and unfaithfulness in the appointed distributors, made a prey to those whose aim and design was to destroy and spoil, and not to reform; which aim and design, made visible by time, divided Christians in these parts of the world into two parties, *Papists* and *Protestants*; who with
keenest

* Coloss. ii.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 69

keenest eye, seeing each other's faults, but blind, through strong delusion to their own, have with all bitterness * vilified each other, and brought the religion they profess into great disrepute, by their hatred of, and malice towards, and their scorn and contempt of one another, when the blessed Founder of their religion hath made love of one another the peculiar mark or character, whereby all men were to know who were his disciples.

The Papists have not only adhered to all the excess and errors, that length of time and incidents brought in among them, without any condescension to others, but have, through worldly policy and cunning, prevailed upon their devotees and bigots to destroy with cruel persecution those who differed in opinion from them. To oppose such gigantic pride and tyranny, is certainly every true Christian's duty; but how hath this opposition in general been exerted, but by pride, cruelty, and malice, not inferior to that of Papists, nor less to the disturbance of the peace and quiet of civil society or government, by both sudden and

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lasting

* This bad disposition in them is much fermented and heightened by partial historians.

lasting interruptions thereof; and the violent of both parties have besieged the true Catholic Church, those who with their fellow members make up that beloved city of God: such as out of fear of God, and love of man, will not join the violent of any party, esteeming the conscientious and quiet sectary, with all his errors, far more acceptable and lovely than the furiously * orthodox; and now Gog and Magog, with all earthly or worldly policy and strength, will besiege, as long as this world shall endure, this city of God, who is a consuming fire to all who oppose and exalt themselves above him.

Thus have I endeavoured to cast some little light on a mysterious passage of the book of Revelation, the fullest and last prophecy † given, humbly offering it with all due deference

* Furioufness is fuitable to the heterodox, but not to the orthodox; the wisdom commanded them is what only becometh them.

† As this our Lord's prophecy extends through all fucceffion of time, to the reftitution and final fulfilling of all things that were to be consequent from his coming here on earth, fo nothing but the laft event and eternity can fully interpret this prophecy: all that the greateft depth and compafs of human learning can do towards an interpretation thereof is only in part, and probably this only

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 71

rence to others consideration; for herein I advance nothing dogmatically, being desirous that what errors there are herein may be rectified; only there may be said, in behalf of this explanation, that there seems nothing forced or strained, in apprehending that there may be no more meant by *St John's* saying, that he saw the souls of them beheaded in evidence and manifestation of their religion, than if he had said, he saw them whose right eye was plucked out, and whose right hand was cut off; *i. e.* through their own self-denial on the same account: and likewise, which should recommend it to the consideration of those it is principally addressed to, that it appears agreeable to the opinion of those blessed reformers, who compiled the public service of our church; for had they not believed now to be the intermediate space of time between the Millennium and the end of the world, all that is advanced by this explanation, how could they have directed us to pray, that "it would please God, of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his elect,

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and only by retrospect, and even that, when far back, is attended with uncertainty.

“and to hasten his kingdom;” for they run into no dotage about a temporary Millennium; a dotage like the temporal restoration of the Jews, more becoming Judaizing than true Christians. For CHRIST’s church, through every point of its duration, being militant here on earth, they that will reign with him, must be content to suffer, as he set them an example; and thus reign above the world by their passive fortitude; for man’s fall, and its miserable effect and consequence in this world, his state by nature is, by Revelation, very expressly and fully declared to be a fall from his first happy nature, and the light and knowledge he was created in, to the reverse, and the necessity of a new covenant for his redemption from his fall, to salvation in heaven. In contradiction to what is thus revealed, lately, his nature hath been, indirectly and directly, much extolled; even so far as if it was sufficient, that thencefrom might arise light enough for a religion acceptable to God for man’s happiness; a doctrine very agreeable to the natural pride of man. A person of great learning, and eminent in his circumstances, some few years ago deceased, speaks thus of the light of man’s nature, and of revealed religion, saying,

saying, that " he was very sensible how much
 " he wanted a Guide, but as the Religion of
 " nature was his theme, he must be content
 " with that light which nature afforded, his
 " business being, as it seemed, only to shew
 " what a heathen philosopher, without any
 " other help, and almost *αὐτοδίδακτος*, may be
 " supposed to think; that he hoped neither
 " the doing this, nor any thing else contained
 " in his Delineation of the Religion of Nature,
 " could be the least prejudice to *any other true*
 " *religion*; and moreover, that whatever was
 " immediately revealed from God must, as
 " well as any thing else, be treated as being
 " what it is; which cannot be, if it is not
 " treated with the highest regard, believed
 " and obeyed; that what had been so much
 " insisted on by him, and as it were the bur-
 " den of his song, was so far from under-
 " mining true revealed religion, that it rather
 " paves the way for its reception." Hence-
 " from it appears, that this person, in his search-
 " ing for wisdom where he could not find it, lost
 " his own wisdom in a point of the dearest con-
 " cern to himself *.

But,

* Mr. Woollaston, in his Religion of Nature delineat-
 ed, towards the conclusion: It must have been very
 acceptable

But, after all, what will signify wisdom, and the most extensive knowledge, could we attain thereto, without that love which edifieth, and is the bond of perfectness in us? Therefore, here shall be mentioned what is apprehended chiefly to have destroyed this love, in those that profess themselves members of the church reformed. It is most evident and certain, that by the New Testament of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, we are forbidden all boasting of knowledge; and the being puffed

up acceptable to have found a gentleman of his character a sincere and open believer, like the most learned men this nation hath produced; and this loss might not have been so much taken notice of, had it not been endeavour'd to be concealed, by the person, who gives, in the preface to the Religion of Nature delineated, a general Account of Mr Wollaston's life, by asserting, that Mr Woollaston (who had taken on him the indelible character of being a Minister of the Gospel, by having solemnly dedicated himself to that service) writing upon the obligations of truth, reason, and virtue, and not mentioning faith, did not put a slight on Christianity; and still more absurdly, by supposing that such a gentleman as Mr Woollaston, upon any account, could have been taken for that notorious, crack-brain'd wretch, Woolston; suppositions not at all reconcileable to reason, notwithstanding the airs that this preface-writer gave himself in making them.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 75

up with pride, upon account thereof, makes it destructive; they who protest against, and dissent from the errors of others, ought not only to know better, but to do better than others; and though Christians are bound to be instant in season and out of season, for what will advance their religion, and to contend earnestly, with unwearied patience, for the faith once delivered to the saints; yet how far and how long they are to be carrying on their protestation against, and their dissent from the errors of others, is what they should be careful and cautious in, lest thereby they become equally blind to God's wisdom and universal goodness, and to their own faults.

Every true member of our church, professes himself not less than a Catholic Christian; for the church we belong unto is Catholic, owns itself to be but a part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church; accordingly the reformers thereof express their protestation against the errors, that had, in length of time, crept into the church of *Rome*, with the temper and moderation becoming Christians; for they had not so far lost their charity, as to look on all the bishops of *Rome* to be Antichrist; to prove which,

which, is a task that no one will hackney himself out for, but the hireling, who, for lucre's sake, is always ready to act in aid of pride, and learned ignorance, or false science. The reformers of our church express thus their protestation against the church of *Rome*, that "as the * Churches of *Hierusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch* have erred, so also the church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith;" and every true Christian, allowing this, hath compassion on them, since the first and purest church that ever was, the church of *Jerusalem*; that church to which, in the days of the Apostles, other churches were subordinate, did in length of time etc. On the fall of Pagan *Rome*, most sadly corrupted in its ways, and deeply stained with the blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus, the Angels in heaven rejoiced and sung praises unto God; but no Christian on earth should rejoice to see the church of *Rome* fall, however corrupt, since it was once, and that for a long time, a glorious part of CHRIST'S Catholic church.

Christians

• Article of Religion xix.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 77

Christians should rejoice to see it reformed; it is only for the enemies of the Christian religion to rejoice at seeing the fall of any corrupt or deformed part of the Church; and the charity of our religion directs what is a proper protestation against their errors, or a charitable remonstrance thereof; and a necessary step towards the reformation of our church, was to join with others in protesting against the usurpation and tyranny of the Popes of *Rome*, in order to pull this usurpation and tyranny down; taking the opportunities occurring so to do, as far as was consistent with innocence, truth, and wisdom; but this in itself is no more a reformation in the church of CHRIST, than the pulling down a ruinous part of a building is the repairing thereof: for reformed or pure religion is not, nor cannot be less than the positive institution of Almighty God, in mercy and in justice, and by infinite wisdom, adapted to the case and state of man; and granting, through the mediation of his only Son, light, comfort, and life from heaven to mortal man, too frail by his nature to keep himself unspotted from the world. The Christian religion is acknowledged abundantly such a positive

sitive institution wherever its purity prevails in the lowest degree, and is preserved by God, the God of peace and order, among a people that live in unanimity and harmony among themselves, and in love for others, more especially for all who profess and call themselves Christians; but Protestation and Dissent, are words expressive of such dislike and detestation, as are apt to lead men into strife and hatred; and the continuing very long therein, and resting thereon, is a ground and means for men to have no religion at all, or a religion the direct reverse to Christianity. For men do not, with any the least truth, propriety, or clearness, make profession of their faith, by calling their faith the Protestant faith; but must leave it thereby vague and uncertain, till the faults and errors of others can become the standard of truth. Protesting, dissenting, and remonstrating, are milder terms indeed than abhorring, and not so contradictory to the order appointed in CHRIST's Apostolic Church, as Presbyterian, nor so impious or irreligious as Papist, Lutheran, or Calvinist; for Christians calling themselves after the names of any minister or teacher of the Gospel, or from occasional

occasional incidents, or from disputes which have risen among Christians, is highly derogatory, and what leads men off from the true faith of our Holy Religion, into many sad errors. The truth of this appears from what came to pass here in the time of the grand Rebellion; for certainly the nation was then a nation of Protestants*; and from what hath lately come to pass in *Poland* †.

The

* The Disciples of our Lord were called Christians first at *Antioch*, and their assuming any other name, upon account of their religion, that is not expressive of their faith in JESUS CHRIST, and of their love and compassion for all Christians, is forbidden them, 1 Cor. i. 14. by what name, tending to keep up wrong distinctions, and endless divisions among them, Christians are called by others, this they cannot help nor remedy, otherwise, but by making all their faith and hope to center in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and confession or acknowledgment hereof.

† *Heylin*, in his *Cosmography*, p. 537, edit. 2d. speaking of the government of *Poland*, makes this observation, "that after the crown became elective, their king so lost his power, as to be little better than the shadow of a king; and likewise, that some of their princes, to gain the succession contrary to law, had parted with many of their royalties and prerogatives, and so limited and restrained the king's authority, and enlarged that
"of

The Dissidents or Dissenters in *Poland*, had great reason to protest against the Church of *Rome*, by having experienced the cruelty of that church, which in the height of pride, pretending to infallibility, can bear no dissent from it; according to this, the Papists may be thought to be the sole and original cause of the misery prevailing in that country, the misery that results from pestilence and sword, and from the danger of seeking protection from foreigners; but countries are not ruined by foreigners, their ruin always comes from themselves; the debt, under the burden of which a nation sinks, takes its origin from sin and guilt, arising from the people thereof rendering evil for evil, through the factions and parties they are divided into; when the multitude of sins or evils, with which this world abounds,

“of their grandees, as reduced their prince below the “majesty of a king.” It is nothing strange, in such a kingdom, to find all the misery and confusion that attend a kingdom wherein there is no king; but many masters, equally oppressive to king and people, and restless, never desist from their practices against both, as long as a prince hath any thing to grant, or a people any thing to lose; not seeing what misery in the end they bring on themselves and others.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 81

abounds, can be no otherwise suppressed or overcome, but by the charity or goodness of our holy Religion, thus in patience opposing evil; and there is no other effectual resistance to the powers that are, when they most glaringly counteract the end they were ordained for, but this; and all other resistance will prove but a progressive change from bad to worse; and every nation, where there is no more than the mere hypocritical profession of the charity of our holy Religion, will fall from its true, perfect, or Christian liberty, into such open and scandalous prophaneness, and public blood-guiltiness, as calls for divine vengeance to afflict and punish such a people, by depriving them of their outward liberty, their inward lost: therefore they are the only patriots who are of that number for whose sake a country is spared.

The Dissidents in *Poland*, by carrying their resenting Protestantism too far, and the Papists, by abiding as they have by their Infallibility, have brought themselves into violent parties, with an inveterate malice, hateful and hating one another; and it appears as if some of these Dissenters were, through their aversion to

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Popery,

Popery, for turning Mahometans; and probably, if the Turks had proved victorious, several of them would have turned Mahometans.

The godliness of the Gospel hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; and is in the highest degree promotive of the honour and happiness of a country; making persons free, and perfectly free, which godliness cannot be any how established in a country without the order, concord, and unanimity among a people, enjoined by the Gospel. Licentiousness and confusion in religion must be attended with the decay of faith, and that decay of faith brings in upon the state * all sorts of iniquity, oppression, grievances, tyranny †, slavery, treachery,

* What a traitor to his country, as well as a Judas to his God and SAVIOUR; must that person be, who, under colour of a conscientious regard for liberty, is for destroying all order in the Church? thereby preparing the way for destructive licentiousness and confusion therein.

† Of all kinds of tyranny, none are so lasting as the tyranny of a set of numerous petty tyrants; when such is the state of a people, there is little probability of its ever being otherwise with them. Any mode of government may

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 83

treachery §, and rebellion; and herein, when the world's iniquity shall come to its fulness, God of his gracious goodness will put an end thereto; accordingly, decay of faith is the foretold sign of the end of the world, but whether such decay is generally gaining ground or not, no human eye can see; for if a scent of rest-

F 2

lessness

may become tyrantical; yet modes of government are not indifferent, "for it is for the transgressions of a land that many are the princes thereof;" and a people blessed with a good and well tempered constitution in their government, suited with moderation to the real exigencies of human affairs, and having that most valuable privilege of trial by juries, the noblest of this nation; for juries are not only judges of fact, but of law, relative to the matter cognisable by them; if they were not, it would be as great a difficulty to shew the use thereof, as how long they would be continued; and Englishmen should take care not to have such guilt publicly lie to their charge, as hath been the means of having such blessings removed by the good and gracious hand of God, who gave them; and who hath commanded at all times, great deference, and all dutiful respect to be paid to judges, from the high station they are placed in.

§ Where the inhabitants of a country are lawless tyrants and slaves, there is not true Christian honour, that being no where to be found, but where the powers that are, rule and are obeyed, as ordained of God for the good of man; and their honour is reciprocally comfortable and satisfactory.

lessness and discontent, excess and extravagance, rising, annoying, and debauching one another, of being without natural affection, of deceiving and being deceived, is found to be prevailing in a country, heretofore eminent above other countries for the valour and integrity of the men, and for the virtue and good housewifery of the women; yet in some other countries the Christian faith may be gaining ground. However this may be, the holy Scriptures direct us, not only not to be any how presumptuously prying into the secret counsels of God herein, but not to be any how anxious about the time of the end of this world, a time the good and righteous man is to look for in joyful hope & for himself and others, trusting in God's goodness and wisdom herein; accordingly, the carefulness and watchfulness commanded in respect of this day, or the day of our death, not overtaking us suddenly and unlooked for, is to be without those melancholy and gloomy thoughts, which damp all chearful industry, in acting a virtuous and beneficial part in life.

The

§ Revel. xxii.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 85

The light of the holy Scriptures hath eminently shone here in this country above what it hath in other countries, and our church was the purest and most reformed part of the Catholic Church; but at present sinking down under disorder, neglect, contempt, and notorious corrupt practices, in a point which immediately concerns its welfare, it cannot with propriety be said to be reformed; but it wants not now so much new laws for its reformation, as better manners in its members, in conforming to its ancient constitution: neither, be the church of any nation ever so much reformed above the churches of other countries, hath it reason to boast of its reformation, and the establishment thereof: so fluctuating are the kingdoms and states of this world, even where there are the wisest and best, the most free and unbiaſſed of princes, to succour and defend the public profession of the Christian faith; and where it is likewise most agreeable to general councils, the most solemn occasional meetings of the Church, or, (what is nearest to general councils, since from the present circumstances of the world there seems not any probability of there being general councils) the most solemn

lemn meetings of the clergy, the bishops and ministers of the Gospel, in convocation; from this, when duly called and met, certainly there is the greatest probability of coming nearest to the * truth of any means that can be devised; notwithstanding general councils and national synods have erred, for the church was never infallible †, but when and as it was founded on the Apostles and Prophets, CHRIST JESUS himself being the chief corner-stone; but now no constitution in a church is or can be so settled;

* The Church of CHRIST, as a catholic or universal visible Society, will never be completely pure, until the time of its being triumphant in Heaven, much less national Churches, which are only parts of the Catholic Church, and should be united thereto.

† The Church not being infallible, doth not take from its due authority and power; the greatest, the most destructive error that any national Church can fall into, is, when it takes itself to be a Church when it is no Church at all, by either being not received or regarded as a part of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of CHRIST, or else being become a schism, through national pride; for as pride and contempt of others, in whomsoever it is prevalent, the ruling passion, separates from the Church of CHRIST, making the most orthodox person a schismatic, so a national church, through national pride, will become a schism, as it is not joined to other Christian Churches by the bands of union enjoined by the Gospel.

settled, but what the conceited and opinionated will find fault with, and the delicate and squeamish reject, no reason that a due and proper regard should not be shewn towards tender consciences; for after their best endeavours after unanimity, men will think differently, they cannot believe just as they will; where indeed they have reason to suspect their belief not to be well founded, they would do well to pray to have their faith increased, their belief helped, and their errors forgiven; humility and charity will thus direct to what is decent and becoming herein, and what is required from us; but for the squeamish and conceited to propose, that what they have fostered in their brain, through an infallibility worse than Popish, should be received, and that the regular constitution of a Church, and its Articles of Religion, in a most solemn matter debated and agreed on, should fall a sacrifice thereto, is as wild and insolent an attempt against Religion, as pride and fanaticism ever advanced and urged; as was attempted lately by a petition improperly addressed; for although the ministers of the Gospel, and those to whom it is administered, are but servants of the same LORD, and

members of the same body, having need of each other's concurring regular aid, in communion one with another, yet they are distinct members, though united and compacted thus in one body: and whatever tends to pervert and confound the differences of administration, and diversities of operations, tends to impair and destroy; and what could more or faster tend to destroy the remains of CHRIST'S Catholic and Apostolic Church here, than for members of our Church to petition, as they did against subscription to Articles of Religion, had it not been improperly addressed: to petition against subscribing to Articles of Religion, or to have no Articles thereof, is, in fact and consequence, to petition to have no religion at all; petitioning that our Churches might become Pantheons, and proper inscriptions for the Altars therein must have been "to the unknown God;" since ministers of all denominations were to have served thereat at large; and likewise the further request of these petitioners was consistent with the rest of their petition, that our universities, like the academies abroad, might become places of polite education, for the accomplish-

ment

ment of fine gentlemen; where, regardless of the end for which our universities were dedicated, by the pious founders thereof, they might "spend their time in nothing else, but "either to tell, or to hear some new thing," which, however right it was at *Athens*, can never be right at any university founded for the education of youth in the principles of our holy Religion; for what God of his gracious goodness and mercy heretofore, (before the coming of JESUS CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of all men, especially of those that believe) overlooked in men, it cannot be imagined that he will overlook in those men, who, under means of seeing the light of the Gospel, are for casting off their faith, and use every means in their power, that it may be so done by others; and whatsoever may be said in excuse for the ignorance of some, who countenanced the late petition, what can be said in excuse for the petitioning clergy; for their ignorance, (where ignorance it was) is altogether inexcusable, unless they are become sunk into the lowest degree of Presbyterianism, like some of the Scotch; for how, unless thus sunk into Presbyterianism, could they ever have imagined, that

that to have no articles of religion, or to have articles of religion come from the people, or their representatives, was consistent with the Gospel system of religion? The authority of Ministers of the Gospel, for the discharge of their ministerial duty, being what they neither receive nor hold from men; their character herein is indelible, except through their own apostacy. God is a spirit, and expects that those, who have the light of his revealed will, or the knowledge of the Gospel, should worship him in spirit and in truth; and the fundamental articles of this worship, are the same throughout the whole Church of God; but the external modes, or public forms for this worship, cannot be expected to be the same in every part of CHRIST'S Catholic Church; therefore, to preserve it from confusion and dissolution, the Holy Scriptures are not silent in what God hath appointed for public decency, order, and unity in his Church; neither is the * Gospel silent to whom the interpretation of those holy Scriptures, relating to decency, order and unity, belongeth.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 2 Peter i.

ON THE MILLENNIUM. 91

In whatever country a reformation in religion is wanting, and the people thereof are blessed with light to see in what points it is wanted in, and with a disposition duly to receive it, there an happy reformation in church and state will be brought about, for the welfare of both are inseparably linked together; but no reformation of religion can take effect, unless articles of religion be originated by the clergy, and afterwards duly received by the laity, which is agreeable to what hath been the practice of CHRIST'S church; in conformity to that promise of his being with his church always, even unto the end of the world. For the parliament to originate and impose articles of religion, this undoubtedly would be to substitute a parliamentary religion instead of the Christian religion; instead of that religion which which JESUS CHRIST did institute, and appointed to be administered unto men, by men ordained for that purpose. Without articles of religion, what remains there are of the public profession of the religion which God, the God of peace and order, instituted, willed, granted, and ordained, through the mediation of his only and eternal Son, for the redemption
and

and salvation of men, will be, through endless disputes, effaced from the minds of the people; therefore, if a second like attempt should be made by the late rejected petitioners, may their petition meet with the same repulse it ought from the honourable house of Commons, the present chosen representatives of the people; that part of the legislative power, assembled under his Sovereign Majesty the King; and who, if they would reflect, probably may see, that they have lately busied themselves too much with those institutions and appointments, which are peculiar to, and sacred in our holy Religion; and from such reflection become a mutual comfort, by being such faithful servants of their king and country as the perfect law of liberty requires; or else, guided by principles inconsistent with the public profession of our holy Religion, they naturally will act to mutual unhappiness and misery, by erasing that from the Church of *England*, which is the basis on which the true and public profession of our holy Religion was placed on by its divine Author.

These restless petitioners, let any one of them seriously consider of, and ask himself
 this

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this question, Whether their petitioning the parliament, either about making or annulling articles of Religion, tends to advance or to destroy Religion? The answer is obvious to any man of common honesty and common sense, at least if he hath any sense at all of the Christian Religion.

The respectable footing on which the ministers of the Gospel were received here, is fenced and guarded by the most solemn ties and obligations on the receivers and the received; and which cannot be broken without prostituting the Church to the powers of this world; a practice that only false prophets, or heterodox ministers and preachers of Religion give into, out of a love of this world; seduced by which, and through a distrust of our LORD, they fall into destructive alliances with this world, cautioned against, and forbidden on the severest penalty. All that can be done by men for the advancement or establishment of the public profession of the Christian Religion, in any country, consists in the different members of CHRIST'S Church acting with unanimity and sympathy, or in communion one with another, by doing the office and duty of
their

their respective stations, as diverse or different members of one body, under one supreme or head. Although such unanimity, regularity, order, and subordination, founded on settled or received articles of the Christian Religion, are necessary to a Church, yet moderation and truth are not less so; and it must be owned, that all irreligious oaths are just causes of offence to consciences any how feeling, and never can contribute to the upholding of a Church, but tend to the decay of that, and of every thing that is good. How far the Christian faith in general may be now on its decline, no humble and sensible man will presume to say; but how much it is so in any particular country, that the contempt and neglect it is treated with there doth shew. Irreligious swearing, like idolatry and bloodshed, is a cause that maketh a land to mourn; but there is no horrid iniquity, no black deed that any nation is guilty of, but what the blood of Jesus CHRIST is sufficient to wash away the stain thereof; and forgiveness always hath been, and is ready to be granted to a people truly and sincerely repenting of the ills they have done, by Almighty God, as good and patient
in

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in extending mercy, as he is mighty to punish. And considering what knowledge this nation hath been enlightened with, and what hath come to pass here, surely this land will be eminent either for its happiness or its misery: however this may be, doubtless the light, which the Sun of righteousness brought into the world, will, in some part of the world, calmly set in glory; and why not in this country, though tempestuous storms and dark clouds elsewhere attend the evening of its day? The Church of CHRIST here on earth, surrounded and besieged by its adversaries, will be defended in its last remains, as the beloved city of God, and his hand discernible in its defence, and his continual righteousness herein acknowledged by all those who believe his revealed will; such apprehensions of the Christian religion should make the Christian walk circumspectly; and the charity of our religion bids us hope for the best from God, abundant in goodness; and the hearts of Englishmen should burn with ardent zeal for the regular profession of the Christian religion, out of faithful love to their country, and sincere regard for the honour and welfare thereof, hoping this,
that

that "their country may continue Christian to
 "the last;" towards obtaining which end
 from future reformation, it behoveth them not
 to be reflecting with bitter and scornful cen-
 foriousness; what small flaw or defect there
 may be in the reformation of our Church, in
 the reforming of which the reformers, sadly
 entangled with the tyranny and darkness that
 then prevailed both in church and state, acted
 according to what they believed was right:
 but whether we are worthy of a Church so near,
 at this distance of time, in purity to the pri-
 mitive Church; such a way of thinking would
 afford a prospect of our being induced "to
 "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we
 "are called, with all lowliness and meekness,
 "with long-suffering, forbearing one another
 "in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of
 "the spirit in the bond of peace;" thus be re-
 formed by the ways and means appointed in
 the Gospel: and thus that we may be, God of
 his infinite mercy grant, &c.

FINIS.

